

House Energy and Commerce Committee Passes Two Public Health Bills Introduced by Rep. Doris Matsui

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WASHINGTON, DC — Today, the House Energy and Commerce Committee passed two of Congresswoman Doris Matsui's (CA-05) public health bills during a full committee mark-up. H.R. 1230, the Acquired Bone Marrow Failure Disease Research and Treatment Act and H.R. 6081, the Stem Cell Therapeutic and Research Reauthorization Act were both passed by voice vote and now go to the House floor for consideration. Both pieces of legislation were passed by the Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee last week with bipartisan support.

"Together, these bills tackle the range of issues faced by individuals with potentially life-threatening bone marrow failure diseases," Matsui said at today's hearing. "If enacted, they would bring a focused approach to research on the potential causes of these diseases, raise awareness about them through public education campaigns — especially in high-incidence communities — and improve treatment options for these individuals by providing one, comprehensive access point to adult stem cell treatment options."

Every year, between 20,000 and 30,000 Americans are diagnosed with some form of acquired bone marrow failure disease, and while individuals stricken with these conditions can take some action to prolong their lives, this diagnosis offers little hope that affected patients will ever fully recover. H.R. 1230, Acquired Bone Marrow Failure Disease Research and Treatment Act would enhance and intensify current and future efforts in the fight against bone marrow failure diseases. The legislation would support increased research on these still relatively unstudied diseases, including what genetic and environmental factors may be associated with the condition and best practices for the diagnosis and treatment of these diseases. H.R. 1230 would also authorize coordinated outreach and informational programs targeted to minority populations affected by these diseases, including information on treatment options and clinical trials research.

Moreover, nearly 40,000 people under the age of 55 are diagnosed with fatal bone marrow illnesses each year, and about 16,000 of those individuals can only be treated via blood stem cell transplant. For these patients, finding an acceptable adult stem cell donor match quickly and easily is a matter of life and death. H.R. 6081, the Stem Cell

Therapeutic and Research Reauthorization Act of 2010, would reauthorize the key programs responsible for helping these individuals by recruiting bone marrow, adult stem cell, and cord blood donations, matching donors and recipients, and linking patients to care.

H.R. 6081 includes the reauthorization of two main components. First, it reauthorizes the C.W. Bill Young Cell Transplantation Program, which houses the National Registry, the Office of Patient Advocacy, and the Stem Cell Therapeutic Outcomes Database. Secondly, it reauthorizes the National Cord Blood Inventory (NCBI), a program that provides grants to public cord blood banks to assist them in collecting a diverse population of donated cord blood units which are then listed on the National Registry.

The Stem Cell Therapeutic and Research Reauthorization Act of 2010 is also being marked up in the Senate Health Education Labor and Pension (HELP) Committee today, and the language has been finalized on a bicameral, bipartisan basis.

“These bills have bipartisan support and incorporate revisions suggested by my colleagues on both sides of the aisle,” added Rep. Matsui. “I am hopeful these important public health bills will be passed by this Congress in a timely matter, so that we can deliver real results for America’s many deserving patients.”

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